

Press Release  
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**The Asian Banker Excellence in Retail Financial Services Awards 2009**

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- *Asia Universal Bank wins two awards - Best Retail Bank in Kyrgyz Republic and Best Retail Bank in Central Asia for 2008.*
- *Asia Universal Bank won for the second time the prestigious award - Best Retail Bank in Kyrgyz Republic for the an excellent expansion strategy.*
- *Over 120 banks and financial institutions from 22 countries across the Asia Pacific, Gulf and Central Asian regions were evaluated as part of the Excellence in Retail Financial Services Programme.*

**Singapore, 20 March 2009** – Asia Universal Bank has been named Central Asia's Best Retail Bank in the eighth Asian Banker Excellence in Retail Financial Services Awards Programme. The bank received the award at The Asian Banker Excellence in Retail Financial Services Awards 2009 ceremony, held in conjunction with the region's foremost retail banking event, the Excellence in Retail Financial Services Convention. The ceremony was held at the Grand Hyatt in Singapore on the evening of March 19<sup>th</sup>, 2009.

About 120 senior bankers from award winning banks in 22 countries across the Asia Pacific, the Gulf and Central Asian regions attended the formal gala dinner, the industry's celebration of the region's best retail bankers that recognizes their efforts in bringing superior products and services to their customers.

The awards programme, administered by The Asian Banker and refereed by prominent global bankers, consultants and academics, is the most prestigious of its kind.

A stringent three month-long evaluation process, based on a balanced and transparent scorecard, determined the winners and the position of the different retail banks in the region. A full list of winners is attached.

**Asia Universal Bank wins two awards - Best Retail Bank in Kyrgyz Republic and Best Retail Bank in Central Asia for 2008**

Asia Universal Bank (AUB) won the Best Retail Bank in Kyrgyz Republic for 2008 for the second time. The bank developed a concept of an extended regional branch network, unprecedented in the Kyrgyz Republic's banking system. Within the framework of this business strategy, AUB initiated the first ever major financial institutional merger in the history of the Kyrgyz Republic. In June 2008, AUB and Kyrgyz Prom Stroi Bank announced their plans to join together, the merger being finalized in November 2008.

AUB pursues a strategy to develop the bank into a retail bank of international reputation, penetrating even rural areas. Kyrgyz Prom Stroi Bank's extensive branch network with a long-term presence in the domestic market combined with AUB's significant international experience and modern technological base, allows a wider range of products and services of the highest standards to be offered to both corporate and individual clients.

As a result of this work, the number of retail deposit accounts opened in 2008 has more than tripled, and the Bank's retail credit portfolio has increased almost fourfold. Not to forget profits, which surged by 98%. Asia Universal Bank offers its clients a number of high-quality services, ranging from traditional cash settlements and internet-based account management to financial advisory services and project financing.

Besides financial performance, the jury was impressed by the standards and improvements in various fields, as the bank benchmarks on an international level, rather than domestic. AUB aspires to launch a new version of its corporate website with internet-banking services, and strives to launch the mobile phone banking services.

**Asia Universal Bank won for the second time the prestigious award - Best Retail Bank in Kyrgyz Republic for the an excellent expansion strategy**

AUB is one of the most stable banks in the Kyrgyz Republic. In 2008 the Bank joined the MasterCard international payment system as a principal member. It also began issuing and servicing the "Elcard" national payment plastic card.

AUB has an extensive network of ATMs and cash dispenser offices to service these plastic card holders. In 2008 the bank successfully developed and implemented its payment terminals project. Currently there are over one hundred "master of payment network" terminals, which the customers regularly use to pay for services and to repay credits and loans.

Among newly launched products are loans like the "Family Car" and "Everything For Family" and a deposit spectrum of "AUB Maximum" to "AUB Investment". In addition, AUB significantly expanded its electronic fund transfer options by joining major international money remittance systems.

**Over 120 banks and financial institutions from 22 countries across the Asia Pacific, Gulf and Central Asian regions were evaluated as part of the Excellence in Retail Financial Services Programme**

"This year over 120 banks and financial institutions in 22 countries across the region were evaluated as part of the Excellence in Retail Financial Services Programme. It has become the single most prestigious, comprehensive and anticipated awards programme that recognises the pursuit of excellence amongst retail financial institutions available almost anywhere in the world today," said Philip Strause, Chairman of The Asian Banker Excellence in Retail Financial Services Programme.

The transparent award evaluation process uses a balanced scorecard approach and a comprehensive methodology to evaluate the strength of individual banks' retail banking

businesses that involves extensive research and probing interviews, and taps on the combined experience of a team of experienced researchers.

Strause, who has over 30 years experience as a principal consultant to leading financial institutions in North America and the Asia Pacific, added: “The Asian Banker Excellence Programme was instituted in 2001 on the premise that an outstanding player in the retail financial services industry should build business franchises that are sustainable, competitive and profitable over a period of time.”

### **About The Asian Banker**

The Asian Banker is the foremost provider of strategic business intelligence on the financial services industry in the Asia Pacific and Middle East regions. The organization has offices in Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Beijing and Dubai as well as representatives in Shanghai, London and New York. With a business that revolves around publications, research services, training and forums, the organization is highly regarded in the financial services community for its incisive and independent commentaries on developments in the industry. The company’s website is [www.theasianbanker.com](http://www.theasianbanker.com).

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